



SPRING 2018 DEVOTIONAL

“Praying for Enlightenment”

WEEK 3: May 28th – June 1st



**PUTTING PRAYER
IN PRACTICE**

THE SERIES

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Monday, May 28, 2018

“Watch Your Step!”

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Psalm 119:105 (NASB)

Have you ever stood in complete darkness and unable to see your hand in front of you? I know I have. In ancient times, there were no fixed street lights at night. So, every person, who ventured the streets during the night would carry a lantern, a candle, or a wick that was encased in glass to prevent the wind from blowing out the flame. The purpose of a lamp was to enable people to see where they were placing their feet as they were walking to avoid stepping into a ditch, stumbling, or falling. Lanterns offered protection against injury. Later on, automobiles came equipped with headlights and hand-held flashlights replaced lanterns. The beams of lights that projected from headlights and flashlights turn the darkness in one's path into day. Beacons of light allow us to see things on the road in front of us and helps us to avoid tragic accidents, that could cost us our lives. It is foolish to drive a car during the night without turning on the headlights.

In Psalms 119:105, David says that the Word of God, His commandments, laws, and precepts are lanterns to our spiritual feet. His Word is instructions for life. It enlightens the eyes and allows us to see how to walk through the darkness of the world. It shows us where we are stepping as to avoid stumbling, falling, and injuring ourselves. It is a flame that is encased in our hearts and cannot be blown out by the difficulties or trials of life. The Word of God is a

headlight, which projects beams of light that allows us to walk in the light of day. It allows us to see trouble in front of us and avoid the pitfalls of sin. It exposes obstacles and roadblocks that stand in our path. It saves our lives. In Psalms 119:105, David is referring to the application of God's word and not merely knowledge. The Word of God is a lantern by night and provides light by day. It gives twenty-four-hour illumination.

Does it seem that you are always bumping into trouble? Are you often finding yourself in a ditch of hopelessness? Are you struggling with head-on collisions with habitual sin? Then maybe it is because you are traveling through the darkness of life without the headlights of God's Word.

Pray for enlightenment and watch your step! Commit yourself to living according to the Word of God. When you do, it will enlighten your eyes so that you will be able to see God for who He is. You will walk with a heart of thanksgiving for God's grace and mercy. It will give you peace in the midst of your storm. It will enlighten your eyes so you can experience victory when facing the trials of life. Stop driving in the dark and turn on your lights. It will change how you walk, and how you see, because it is a lantern during the night and light during the day.

“When you walk about, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; And when you awake, they will talk to you. For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life.”

Proverbs 6:22-23 (NASB)

"Walk in the Light of the day or Crash in the Abyss of darkness."

– Darrell Rose

Tuesday, May 29, 2018

Are you Wiser Today Than Yesterday?

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For through wisdom your days will be many, and years will be added to your life.

Proverbs 9: 10-11 (NIV)

As I sit here and write this devotional, yesterday was Mothers Day and as I think about "my momma", I cant help but to be overcome with joyful emotions. I remember growing up and truly believing that I had the best mom on the planet. It wasn't until I got to college, my freshmen year, that I realized the depth of my appreciation for all she had done for me.

So I sat down in my dorm room and wrote her this long letter thanking her for the sacrifices she made and for raising me in a single parent home. I thanked her for taking me to church and "making " me go to church. And out off all the things that I included in that letter, there was "one thing" that I wouldn't dare leave it out. I thanked my mom for "whipping me". It was as if I had suddenly been struck by a blinding light like, Paul on the Damascus road and that my mom choosing not the "spare the rod" finally made sense to me. My mom whipped me because she loved me. I

have to admit that growing up I don't think I saw it that way. I emphatically disagreed with Mr. and Mrs. Belt or Uncle Paddle. But one of the main things I discovered about my moms disciplining me is that it instilled a healthy fear within me. In short, I knew that if I didn't act right my mom would show me some "tough love." In other words, because of that discipline not only did it cause me to have a healthy fear for my mom, it also allowed me to make "better decisions."

The first part of our devotional verse says "Fearing God will cause you to make "better decisions" (Terry's paraphrase) Let me ask you a question. Do you find yourself making the same bad decision over and over again? Well my friends, you are not alone. We all have many times fallen into a routine of walking on that treadmill of making bad choices. I think the real question that we must ask ourselves is, "Are we wiser today than we were yesterday?" I truly believe that God in His great love for us, will give each and everyone of His children some "tough love" so that we can gain not only a healthy fear of Him but also so that we can make better decisions in the future. Its no secret that we will all "drop the ball" or 'miss the shot" at one time or another. But the truth of the matter is we should be able to look back over our lives and say "Things I use to do I don't do no more; the places I use to go I don't go no more; the things I use to say I don't say no more." Why? Because although God is not through with me yet, I'm wiser today than I was yesterday.

Join me in this prayer. Father, I pray that You will open my eyes to remember the “tough love” You’ve shown me over the years, so that I can have a greater fear of You, which I pray will help me make better decisions for years to come. In Jesus’ name. AMEN!

Real Love is Tough Love – Hebrews 12:6

– Min. Terry Borens

Wednesday, May 30, 2018

In Living Color

¹⁵ For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God’s people, ¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷ I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,

Ephesians 1:15-18 (NIV)

Years ago the famous American reggae and pop singer – songwriter, Johnny Nash, composed and performed the chart smashing hit entitled “*I Can See Clearly Now*”. Those lyrics are forever etched in the minds of music fans all over the world. “*I can see clearly now that the rain is gone, I can see all obstacles in my way. Gone are the dark clouds that*

had me blind. It’s gonna be a bright-bright sunny day.” The ability to see clearly or to have understanding on a situation can be priceless. We need understanding in our marriages. We need understanding on our jobs and in our churches. We need understanding in our friendships and associations. We need understanding politically and socially. And most of all we need understanding in our relationship with God the Father. Whether you are a new Christian or a seasoned saint, we all are at some point in life seeking a deeper understanding about God’s purpose for us in our walk with Him. What are the items that we as a believer should pray and ask God for?

Here in Ephesians 1:15-18, the apostle Paul addresses the church at Ephesus. As was his custom, Paul encouraged his fellow Christians. Yet after he complimented them for what they had done well, he then directed their attention to his prayer requests for them. Paul also wrote why their understanding was vital to their spiritual development. Paul knew that the believers at Ephesus were devout Christians, however there was a deeper level of maturity and development that he wanted them to have. As you continue your journey with God here are two areas that you must ask God for so that you can grow in your understanding in Him.

First, you must ask God in prayer for a spirit of insight. Paul asked that God would give the Ephesians the “Spirit of wisdom and revelation” (Ephesians 1:17). The spirit that Paul is talking about refers to an attitude, instead of the Holy Spirit. Wisdom (*sophia*) and revelation (*apokalypsis*) are the description of that attitude. When you as a Christian have this attitude, it means that you understand because of your faith in Jesus Christ. You are a professed possessor of a

divine spiritual communication.¹ As believers we have already received the Holy Spirit but this type of attitude becomes available to us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:2). Wisdom is the ability to see reality correctly (*sophia*, vs. 8, 3:10). Revelation is the disclosure of the subject at hand, which for you as a believer is the knowledge of God Himself (so that you may know Him better). When we as believers gain a deeper, more experiential knowledge of God, the world ceases to be black and white and begins to be viewed in living color.

Second, You must ask God to give you spiritual understanding. *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people (vs. 18)*. Paul uses Hebraic metaphors to cause his brothers and sisters to understand what he's saying. The "eyes of your heart" refer to the whole inward makeup of man. This makeup is comprised of our spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual being. For us as believers to fully have spiritual understanding, we must have a full apprehension of God, not just in theory, but also in practice.

As you continue your walk with God, will you commit yourself to prayer for these qualities?

Christians should not think it enough to have warm affections, but they should labor to have clear understandings; they should be ambitious of being knowing Christian, and judicious Christians.²

¹ Mounce, William D. *Interlinear for the Rest of Us*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013.

² Henry, Matthew, and E. Blomfield. *A New Family Bible*. Bungay: Printed and Published by J.R. and C. Childs, 1828.

Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding. Proverbs 3:13 (ESV)

– Min. Chris Johnson

Thursday, May 31, 2018

I Can See Clearly Now

The unfolding of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

Psalm 119:130 (NASB)

The songwriter Johnny Nash wrote the words to the now vintage song, "*I can see clearly now the rain is gone ...I can see all obstacles in my way.*" I don't know that when Mr. Nash penned these words, he had captured the essence of a passage of Scripture.

From the natural and physical perspective, we all long to see things clearly. This is why a career in optometry remains lucrative. As humans we are confident that we already see clearly. The sources of this confidence range from our level of education, to our influence and status and communicates to ourselves and others how well we actually see things in life. However, if our life is an indicator of how well we see things, then the majority of us are stumbling as if we are walking in the dark.

In Psalm 119:130 David communicates that God's Words gives us light. Using metaphoric language, the psalmist

Friday, June 1, 2018

communicates and elevates an everyday occurrence and applies it to God's Word. The disclosure of God's words to us results in spiritual insight where otherwise we would be left in the dark spiritually. Additionally, the psalmist describes for us who God's Word is disclosed to. God's Word is disclosed to the person who is naïve or the one lacking common sense. Do not read these words and take them as criticism; but rather view them in the sense that when it comes to God and His ways, we all are lacking and are naïve.

God wants us to clearly know Him. Not only has God disclosed His word to us, He has also provided someone in whom His word is seen and that is His Jesus Christ. In John 8:12 Jesus says, *I am the Light of the world*. Through Jesus Christ, God has disclosed to us what was once hidden and has communicated to us, mankind, in His written Word. His Word provides us with direction and open our understanding, so that we can see clearly, and we can see the obstacles in our way.

Remember there may be some God ordained moments where obstacles are placed in our path, but we do not have to stumble over them. When we open His Word, it's like opening our curtains on nice spring day, where the light floods in and we are able to see things as they are intended, as He purposed.

Be thankful God has disclosed His word to us. He could have left us in the dark.

See what I'm saying?

– Min. Michael Brown

Follow the Leader

“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.”

John 16:13 (ESV)

If you've ever traveled to a city or a country for the first time, one of the most valuable things to have is a guide. Whether it's a person or even a book, a guide will help you to navigate unknown surroundings and avoid places that might be harmful or dangerous. A good guide is one that has extensive, if not complete, knowledge of the place they are guiding you through. That is what makes the guide trustworthy. Furthermore, if your guide is a good guide, they will impart knowledge of the area to you; so that you will get the most out of your time there.

The Christian walk is no different. In 1 Peter 2:11, Peter likens believers in the world to *“sojourners and exiles.”* He urges them not to behave as worldly people do, but to walk on a different path. Just like it is easy to recognize tourists in your hometown, so should believers navigate life in a way that is different from unbelievers. As believers, we need a guide to help us navigate through life according to God's will, not following the flawed wisdom of the world, but the good, orderly direction that comes only from God. This is why when Jesus told His disciples that He was about to leave them, that He promised to send them a Helper, someone who would be with them always to guide and

instruct them, not only in how they should act, but also, as they matured in their walk, but about the things to come.

The Helper Jesus spoke of is the Holy Spirit. He lives in every believer; so that no matter where those in Christ go, they are never without help in navigating life. He is the perfect guide to the truth. Jesus said in John 14:6, *“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life”*, the Holy Spirit is our guide to the truth that is Jesus. He leads us as we mature in our faith to a greater understanding of who Jesus is, helping us to go through life in a way consistent with His, in the will of the Father.

Unity in the Church is not about adopting a particular political ideology, or agreeing on a set of social conventions, it is about following the leading of the Holy Spirit; so that we can be disciples in the truest meaning of the word – a follower or adherent of another’s teaching to the point that the actions of the follower are the same as the teacher. Kind of like kids playing “Follow the Leader.” Unity in the Church comes only when believers respond with sensitivity and submission to the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Sunday, May 20th, was Pentecost, the moment when the promise Jesus made in John 16:7 was fulfilled. In Acts 2, we see the beginning of the story of how 11 men responded with sensitivity and submission to the presence of the Holy Spirit, and went on to change the world. Can you imagine what, given all that is available to us today, we can do to be catalysts for revival if, like those 11 men, we respond to the presence of the Holy Spirit with sensitivity and submission?

This week, pray for unity in the Church; that believers of all stripes would respond to the presence of the Holy Spirit and become catalysts for revival – starting with yourself.

***Revival happens in one heart at a time.
Let it start with you!***

– Min. Russell De Pina